

## We have **vacancies** at our care home. *A safe caring, homely environment.*

When looking for a care home, you need to feel that the care and services provided meet or exceed your expectations. At Forder Lane House we focus on the individual, their needs, preferences and aspirations. Driven by an individual care plan, our team aims to balance care and support to maintain independence, along with encouragement to lead an active lifestyle wherever possible. Our friendly, homely atmosphere allows each resident to continue their daily life in a dignified way, with a high level of privacy, knowing that care and support is always available.



Please call us for more information 01803 863532



**SOUTH DEVON RURAL**  
HOUSING ASSOCIATION LIMITED

South Devon Rural Housing Association Limited  
Registered England and Wales  
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**We are open from 8.45 am to 4.45pm Monday – Friday**

An Exempt Charity. South Devon Rural Housing Association Limited is a registered society under the Cooperative and Community Benefit Societies Act 2014 and The Homes and Communities Agency No. LH0920.



Totnes work hub – a South Devon Rural Housing enterprise

[www.totnesworkhub.co.uk](http://www.totnesworkhub.co.uk)

# Summer Newsletter

Inside this issue:

Welcome from SDR Chief Executive | We're spreading our wings | First Care Home award winner | Summer Fun: Gardening, Cookery and Wordsearch | Need help paying bills? | Taking care over repair | Performance Dashboard

Summer 2021

Send Us Your Bloom photos!

Large print copies available on request. Please call 01803 863550

Summer Gardening, Cookery and Wordsearch inside



**SOUTH DEVON RURAL**  
HOUSING ASSOCIATION LIMITED

# Despite the many challenges there are better times ahead

## Welcome from SDR Chief Executive Christine Candlish

This continues to be a challenging time for everyone, both in the UK and around the globe. Of course SDR is no exception to that, especially as we are in the 'people business' and some of our clients fall into the 'clinically vulnerable' category.

Looking back on the first half of this year, we can be pleased at the way our organisation, our employees and our residents have coped with the biggest challenge most of us have faced since the Second World War – which of course many of our older clients will remember on some level.

### Vigilant

As I write this, Government has announced the relaxation of many of the more limiting Covid restrictions. SDR will be monitoring this new situation carefully, checking what impact the more relaxed approach has on the general population and the communities around us.

I want to reassure everyone that we will continue to be vigilant and to put the safety of our residents and staff at the forefront of our thoughts and procedures. Only when we are confident that it is safe to do so will we allow ourselves to relax even a little. And we will continue using the safe working practices that are embedded in our organisation.

On that note, I'm pleased to record that Sara Maynard, the new manager at our Forder Lane House care home, has introduced an Employee of the Month award scheme. This will encourage staff to stay focused and to go the extra mile whenever an opportunity arises. Congratulations to Chris Laffen, our first winner – see Page 3.

### Distractions

I also want to congratulate our subsidiary, Rural Homes Ltd., on completion of the independent living apartments at Brimhay. The first tenants of Elmhurst Court (see Page 4) will move in this summer.

Despite the distractions of the pandemic, SDR continues to grow and the scope of our organisation is illustrated by the map on Page 2.

Away from work, we all need to relax and have fun, especially in these trying times. So have a look at our interactive spread on Pages 5-7 for some Gardening and Cookery tips and to test your brain with our Summer Wordsearch.

I hope you enjoy these. Do let us know how you get on and please send in your gardening photos and stories about your experiences this year.



Christine Candlish

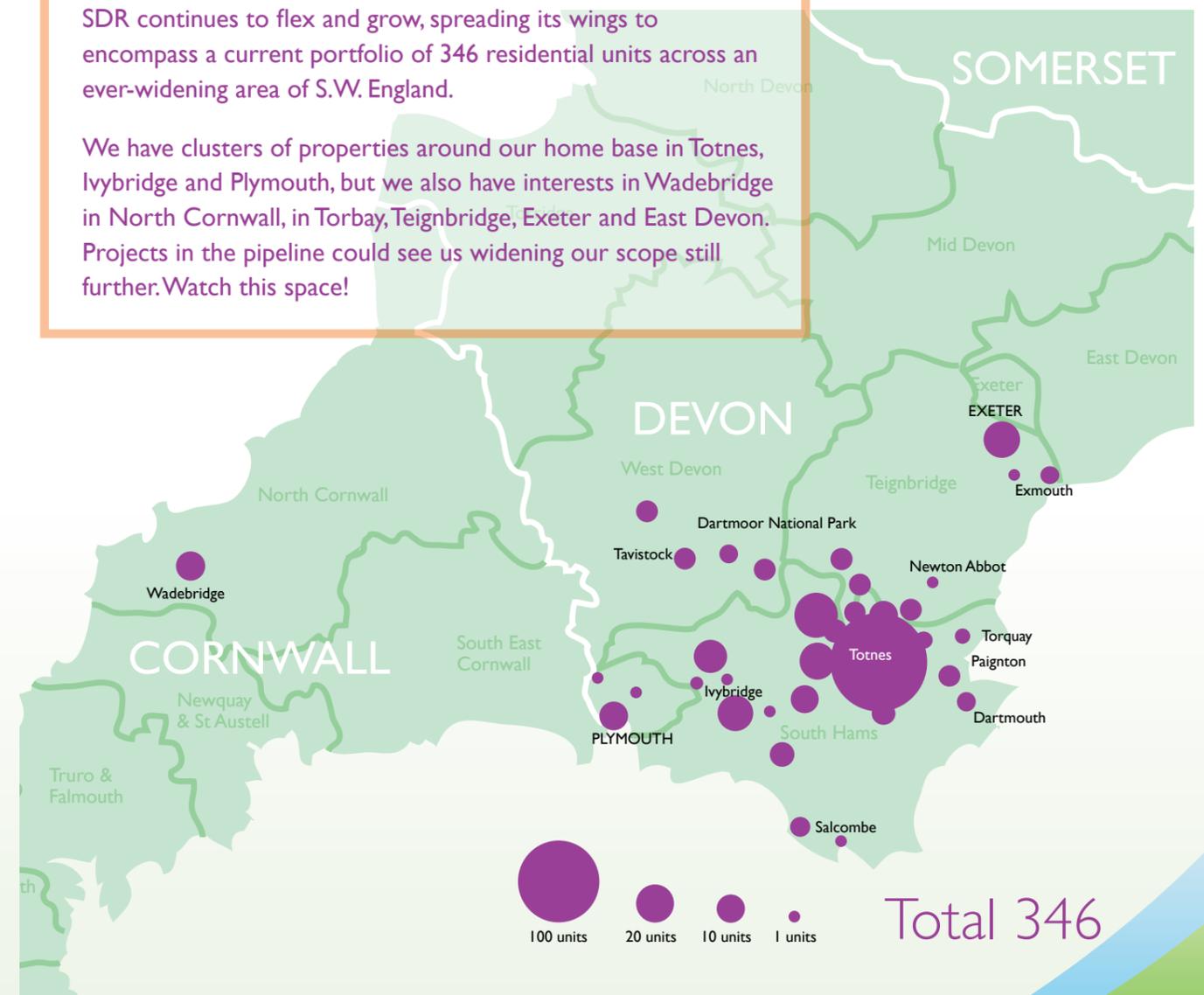
# We're spreading our wings!



Since South Devon Rural Housing Association was founded 63 years ago, it has established an enviable reputation for providing a range of affordable social housing, based in the South Hams.

SDR continues to flex and grow, spreading its wings to encompass a current portfolio of 346 residential units across an ever-widening area of S.W. England.

We have clusters of properties around our home base in Totnes, Ivybridge and Plymouth, but we also have interests in Wadebridge in North Cornwall, in Torbay, Teignbridge, Exeter and East Devon. Projects in the pipeline could see us widening our scope still further. Watch this space!



# Care Home launches employee of the month award scheme

**...AND CHRIS IS FIRST WINNER!**



“We’re looking forward to this award being spread around the whole team and helping us to maintain a high standard of safety and service for all our residents”.

**We’re proud to announce the first winner of a new award introduced in June at our Forder Lane House Care Home in Dartington.**

The Employee of the Month award scheme is the brainchild of the care home’s new manager, Sara Maynard, and the first winner is **Chris Laffen**, who has worked at FLH for nine years.

Nomination forms are available outside the nurses’ office at the care home and each month staff and residents will be able to vote for the nominee who they feel is most deserving of the award.

Chris won his award because he’s always cheerful and helpful – and because people have noticed him going the extra mile when carrying out his duties.

Sara Maynard said: “The award scheme is an incentive for every staff member to be focused at all times on doing the job to the best of their ability.

“Training can only go so far in teaching people what to do – but this award is more about how you do the job. That means having a smile on your face and being prepared to give that little extra when it’s needed.

“We have a great team of people here at Forder Lane and this teamwork has helped enormously as together we’ve faced the extra challenges posed by Covid. Once things return to normal, it will continue to be just as important for the smooth running of our operation that every member of the team does their bit.

“Good teams are made up of individuals who know how their efforts contribute to the overall success of the team and make our clients feel truly at home. This positive attitude deserves recognition, so each winner will receive a certificate and a bottle of something sparkling.



**Sparkling: Chris Laffen with his Employee of the Month certificate and a bottle of Prosecco to celebrate.**



**Elmhirst Court, Brimhay. Ready for first tenants to move in this summer.**

## Flats offer taste of independent living

**CONSTRUCTION COMPLETED – READY FOR FIRST TENANTS TO MOVE IN**

Now ready for occupation are 11 new ‘Stepping Stone apartments’ specially laid out and equipped for people with various levels of learning difficulties on our site at Dartington.

This latest development symbolises the broad spectrum of ages and needs that South Devon Rural aims to cater for going forward. For many of the new tenants it will offer their first taste of independent living.

The building was formally handed over by contractors Coyde Construction in early July and the first set of tenants for the new apartments were due to be allocated by August.

### SHORTLIST

Following agreement with South Hams District Council that the apartments should be named **Elmhirst Court** – in honour of the Elmhirst family who founded the Dartington Hall Trust – SDR has been working with Devon County Council’s Locality team to identify and shortlist the first set of tenants for this exciting new venture.

The project, Phase 5 of SDR’s Brimhay Development Scheme, is a collaboration with Devon County Council (DCC) and South Hams District Council.

Working with the two councils started early in the design process, to ensure that the architect’s specification best matched the needs of the new occupants – from the layout of the building, to ease of access and suitability for a range of mobility issues.

### FUNDED

**Elmhirst Court** has been funded by a £400,000 grant from Homes England and by the sale of market-value homes on the Brimhay Gardens development, with the surplus gift-aided back through SDR’s development arm, Rural Homes Ltd.

Chief Executive Christine Candlish said: “These fantastic homes will provide tenants with a safe, secure place to live. For many this will be their first taste of independent living, away from families, offering a chance to develop and grow in confidence. They will continue to be supported by their care teams as they adapt to a different lifestyle.

### HUMAN

“We’re now completing the process of selecting the first tranche of tenants. It’s the human element that makes any building come alive and we look forward to welcoming people into Elmhirst Court this summer.

“Our mission is to continue delivering genuinely affordable housing in South Devon for clients in a wide range of ages and needs. Providing this type of home in a village setting is vital in enabling local people to stay close to family and friends and to feel part of their local community”.

**Promotional brochure for the new apartments.**



# Summer

Unless you're the type of gardener who only uses their planting space to grow vegetables and fruit for the table, you'll want to use your garden for your own enjoyment and that of family and friends. That means planting flowers, shrubs and trees that will excite the eye, enthrall the nose, or attract wild birds and insects. Or all three of the above!

Here, we suggest how you can achieve those aims – always allowing for places in the summer garden where you can relax or entertain against a backdrop of gorgeous colours and nose-twitching scents.

A treat for all the senses – right through to autumn

## Riot of colour

If you followed the suggestions in our Spring issue, your garden, yard or patio will already be a riot of colour. Now what you want to do is ensure that it stays that way right through to the cooler days of autumn, when nature prepares for the winter ahead.

## Bee-friendly too

July and August are the months when summer bedding reaches a new intensity. Vibrant reds, oranges and yellows combine to reflect the heat of the sun, giving beds, borders and containers a look that replicates the warm glow of a roaring fire.

Red hot pokers, flat headed yarrow, long-lasting penstemons and pinks create a riot of colour that, properly tended, will last until the cooler days of autumn. Many of these varieties are also bee-friendly.

Let's not forget, too, the combined sensory delight of a beautiful English rose, a sight to behold which offers the added benefit of its heavenly fragrance.

Now is the time to arrange scented plants in pots on your patio or terrace. Consider colour themed borders to create that breath-taking display; continue with dead-heading plants that will reward you with fresh blooms; and feed and water summer bedding – especially during those dry spells that mean summer is really in full swing.

Go through your rose beds and borders towards the end of July / early August. Dead-head and tidy rose bushes and then apply a general fertiliser. That should ensure that you keep them in tip top condition through to the autumn and, depending on the variety, the bonus of a second flowering.

Most of the hard work is already done. So you can relax and enjoy your garden – sitting out in the shade, eating al fresco, entertaining friends or simply absorbing the peace and tranquillity of your garden at the end of a busy day at work or in your home office. Enjoy your plants and please share your photos with us at [info@southdevonrural.com](mailto:info@southdevonrural.com)

*DON'T FORGET:* The planting guidance above is also relevant for those with window boxes, pots and tubs.

**(below) A bee collecting pollen from a gorgeous deep pink penstemon.**



# Time

Create delicious, nutritious dishes using fresh or frozen produce

## Fruity Summer Pudding (serves 6)

### INGREDIENTS

Summer fruits (fresh or frozen\*)  
450g raspberries  
225g redcurrants  
110g blackcurrants  
150g caster sugar  
7-8 slices white bread from a large loaf  
Dairy cream or ice cream to taste – or a non-dairy equivalent.

\*If you're using a frozen summer fruit mix, you'll need a pack around 800g in weight  
You will need one 850 ml pudding basin, lightly greased with butter or a non-dairy spread.

### WHAT TO DO

Top and tail fresh currants, then rinse all fruits – removing any musty ones. Or thaw frozen fruit and drain off any excess juice into a cup for use later. Place fruits and sugar in a pan and cook gently for 3-5 minutes until sugar and juices blend together. Don't overcook!

Remove from heat and drain juice. Line pudding basin with slices of bread, overlapping each slice and pressing together to seal.

Fill any gaps with small pieces of bread so no juice can get through when you add fruit. Pour in the fruit and cover with another slice of bread. Place a plate or saucer on top of the mixture so it fits snugly inside the rim of the basin. Place a bag of sugar (or similar weight) on top to weigh it down. Leave in the fridge overnight.

Just before serving your pudding, turn it over and place on a large serving dish. Spoon the saved juice over the top to soak any areas of white bread. Top with a sprig of mint and serve with thick cream / ice cream – or non-dairy option.

*TIP: Try not to eat more than one helping!*

Send Us Your Bloom photos!



# Some like it hot!

Can you spot the 24 'hot' words in our sizzling Wordsearch puzzle?

Here's a fun way to spend your next coffee break – solving our Summer Wordsearch.

Can you pick out the 24 heat-related words hidden in the grid? Words are horizontal and vertical, forwards and backwards and diagonal. Good luck!

Here are 24 the words you're looking for:

- ABLAZE    AGLOW
- BAKED    BLISTER
- BLUSH    BOIL
- BURN     FEVER
- FIERY    FLAME
- FLARE    FRIED
- HUMID    MOLTEN
- OVEN     PEPPER
- ROAST    SCALD
- SCORCH   SEARING
- SIZZLE   SMOKE
- STEAM    TORRID



# Struggling to pay the bills? Help is at hand



These are unprecedented times, with Covid 19 impacting everyone in various ways. One impact can be around finances – paying bills, feeding your family and paying rent. A reduced income or lost job can increase household stress.

We're aware of this and want to work sensitively with you if you suffer financial difficulty. Paying your rent is a condition of tenancy, so we'd advise prioritising this where you can. If you can't pay or have a delay in receiving income or benefits, please let us know.

We can offer a friendly listening ear whilst sharing information and signposting you towards support services.

If you are having issues paying your rent due to the impact of Covid, please contact us, we will do our best to help you.

These two links may be useful. If you don't have web access, we can talk you through key points.

<https://www.moneyadviceservice.org.uk/en/articles/coronavirus-and-your-money>

<https://www.moneyadviceservice.org.uk/en/articles/coronavirus-what-it-means-for-you>

You could also apply to your Local Authority for Discretionary Housing Benefit (DHP). We can help with applications.

New Universal Credit claims or amending existing claims can cause delays; we may be able to help.

Struggling food-wise? We'll put you in touch with local charities and foodbanks.

Struggling with gas/electric bills? Your supplier may be able to offer a repayment plan.

Keep in touch with our housing team. We're here with help and support.

# South Devon Rural acquires Honeywill Court in Exeter

South Devon Rural has recently acquired Honeywill Court in Exeter, formerly managed by SDR on behalf of private housing company Kindle Homes.

Having managed the property for 10 years, we were pleased to purchase the property when it came up for sale earlier this year.

Honeywill Court – off Butts Road, Exeter – has now become part of an expanding portfolio of properties that we own and manage locally.

For a better picture of how SDR's 346 property assets are spread across an ever-widening area of South West England, see the map on Page 2.



Honeywill Court, Exeter, recently purchased from Kindle Homes.

## Still taking care over repairs

As soon as it became clear that we were facing a prolonged emergency situation, SDR's entire operation was restructured to ensure all functions continued to work normally, whilst protecting employees and members of the public for the duration of the pandemic.

At the time of writing, the Government had announced that many Covid restrictions would be relaxed from 19 July 2021. SDR will monitor the situation and, depending on the outcome of these restrictions being relaxed, we will look at starting to deliver routine repairs again.

Meanwhile, SDR's offices in Totnes remain closed. Our staff are working from home and are able to deal with emails and telephone calls as before, by operating these systems remotely.

A dedicated online portal is available for all residents of SDR owned or managed properties, to ensure that services operate as close to normal as possible. Staff and contractors will continue to keep appointments. These will be conducted remotely where at all possible and will only be face-to-face in exceptional circumstances.

Non-urgent repairs and routine maintenance will be curtailed and only urgent or emergency work will still be done, with contractors following strict safety procedures. For this reason, some work may take longer than normal and waiting times may also be extended. We apologise for any inconvenience this may cause.

For the latest information, please access our website at: <https://southdevonrural.co.uk/>  
The easiest way to continue to contact us is by phone (see office number below) or by email: [info@southdevonrural.com](mailto:info@southdevonrural.com)

When reporting emergency repairs please make sure they are URGENT and are GENUINE emergency repairs. A non-urgent repair can be reported during normal office hours by calling SDR's office on **01803 863550** Monday to Friday between 8:45am and 4:45pm.

An emergency is defined as something that could cause danger to someone's health or safety, or cause serious damage and destruction to property. Emergency repairs will be carried out within 24 hours. Please contact us if you would like further information on repairs.



### EMERGENCY CONTACT NUMBER

**01803 863550** Out of Hours Helpdesk 

Calls will be automatically re-routed to National Property Assistance



SDR monitor performance in a number of ways, to ensure quality of customer service and value for money is achieved. One of the ways we monitor performance is by using Key Performance Indicators (KPI's). Results from these regular checks on key areas are monitored, analysed and acted on by the management team, and also reported to SDR's Board.

These indicators cover a number of operational areas, such as repairs, allocations, rent arrears and anti-social behaviour.

Please see table below on how SDR are doing on some of the main KPI's. Green indicators show we are meeting or exceeding targets.

### Performance Dashboard

	Performance 2020/21	QTR 1 (Apr - Jun)	QTR 2 (July - Sep)	QTR 3 (Oct - Dec)	QTR 4 (Jan - Mar)	Target 2021-22
<b>ASSET MANAGEMENT</b>						
Annual Gas Safety Checks Completed	100%	100%				100%
Emergency Repairs	100%	100%				100%
Urgent Repairs	100%	100%				95%
Repairs/Contractor Satisfaction	100%					90%
<b>RENT ARREARS</b>						
GN Tenant Rent arrears as % of annual debit	0.52%	0.45%				1.00%
<b>ALLOCATION AND VOID MANAGEMENT</b>						
Void loss on homes as a % of gross rent	0.07%	0.37%				1.00%
Average relet time (excluding major works)	36	N/A				14

No relets in quarter one